

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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SUBJ: VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS ON RELATIONS WITH
CHINA AND CUBA

REF: CARACAS A-075 OF MARCH 27, 1974

1. AT AN APRIL 8 NEWS CONFERENCE FOREIGN MINISTER EFRAIN SCHACHT
ARISTEGUIETA REPORTEDLY SAID HE FAVORED ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS
WITH THE PRC AND INDICATED THE GOV'S INTEREST IN RE-ESTABLISHING
RELATIONS WITH CUBA.

2. WITH REGARD TO CHINA, SCHACHT IS QUOTED AS SAYING: "IT IS
IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO DISREGARD A NATION OF ALMOST A BILLION PEOPLE...
CHINA IS PART OF THE FAMILY OF NATIONS, AND AN IMPORTANT PART. SO
IT IS NATURAL WE SHOULD SEEK RELATIONS."

3. CONCERNING CUBA, SCHACHT IS QUOTED AS STATING: "CUBA IS AN
ECONOMIC, HISTORIC, POLITICAL, AND HUMAN REALITY WHICH VENEZUELA
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NEITHER CAN NOR WANTS TO IGNORE. VENEZUELA IS INTERESTED IN MAIN-

TAINING RELATIONS WITH CUBA.... I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT DID NOT TAKE THE DECISION /TO RENEW RELATIONS/. SCHACHT WENT ON TO CHARACTERIZE THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY WITH REGARD TO CUBA AS THAT OF CONTINUING THE POLICY OF THE CALDERA ADMINISTRATION, WITH SLIGHT VARIATIONS. HE REPORTEDLY STATED THAT VENEZUELA WOULD NOT ACT UNILATERALLY TO RE-ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH CUBA, BUT WOULD WAIT FOR AN OAS DECISION TO LIFT THE 1964 SANCTIONS, WHICH, ACCORDING TO SCHACHT, COULD BE DONE BY A SIMPLE MAJORITY (12 VOTES).

4. COMMENT: SCHACHT'S REMARKS ON RELATIONS WITH THE PRC ARE NOT SURPRISING, AND IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT RELATIONS WILL BE ESTABLISHED WIN THE EARLY PART OF THE PEREZ ADMINISTRATION (PERHAPS STARTING AT A LEVEL BELOW THAT OF FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS). HIS COMMENTS WITH REGARD TO CUBA ARE SIGNIFICANT, IN THAT HE DID NOT REPEAT THE FREQUENTLY STATED CONDITION OF PRESIDENT PEREZ THAT CUBA WOULD HAVE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE FOR THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS. IT IS ALSO NOTEWORTHY THAT SCHACHT APPARENTLY AGREES WITH THE CALDERA ADMINISTRATION'S CONTENTION THAT ONLY A SIMPLE OAS MAJORITY (AS OPPOSED TO A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY) IS NEEDED TO LIFT THE OAS SANCTIONS.

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